

Name: Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee.

Date: February 26, 1998.

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Tobacco Programs, Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation Building, Room 223, 1306 Annapolis Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27608.

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting is to review and consider alternative packaging methods for flue-cured tobacco and other related matters for the 1998 flue-cured tobacco marketing season.

The meeting is open to the public. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee at the meeting should contact John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, (202) 205-0567, prior to the meeting. Written statements may be submitted to the Committee before, at, or after the meeting.

Dated: January 30, 1998.

John P. Duncan III,

Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs.

[FR Doc. 98-2856 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-073N]

Nominations for Membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Extension of Time Period to Solicit Nominations.

SUMMARY: In the **Federal Register** notice dated January 9, 1998, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it was soliciting nominations for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF). Nominees are sought who have scientific expertise in the fields of Microbiology, Epidemiology, Food Technology, Food Production, Risk Assessment, and Animal and Public health. Persons from the government, industry, academia, and consumer advocacy groups are invited to submit nominations. The notice asked that nominations be sent to the Office of the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service no later than 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. We would like to extend the date through February 28, 1998.

DATES: The nominee's typed resume or curriculum vitae should be sent to the

Office of the Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), 6913 Franklin Court, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700, on or before February 28, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Ellis at the above address or by telephone at (202) 501-7625.

Done at Washington, DC, on January 28, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-2762 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 97-081N]

Equivalence Criteria for Imported Meat and Poultry Products

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for public comment a Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) discussion paper, which was prepared by New Zealand with participation from the United States, Australia and Canada, relating to determinations of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems. **DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before March 9, 1998. **ADDRESSES:** Copies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) discussion paper relating to judgments of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems are available from the FSIS Docket Clerk in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Submit one original and two copies of written comments on the paper to: FSIS Docket Clerk, Docket #97-081N, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700. Facsimile comments may be sent to the Docket Clerk at (202) 690-0486. All comments received in response to this notice will be available for public comment in the Docket Clerk's Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Mark Manis, Director, International Policy Division, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation; (202) 720-6400, or by electronic mail to mark.manis@usda.gov.

Background

FSIS is making available for public comment a Codex discussion paper, which was prepared by New Zealand with participation in drafting meetings by the United States, Australia and Canada. The paper was prepared for the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). It discusses and describes: (1) The basis for the determination of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with different food inspection and certification systems; (2) protection from foodborne hazards by application of particular sanitary measures, and the "appropriate level of protection" that is achieved by reference to "food safety objectives"; (3) application of a risk-based approach in the comparison of food safety objectives; (4) principles to be utilized in the determination of equivalence; (5) a step-wise process for facilitating judgment of equivalence; and (6) the need for CCFICS to develop principles and guidelines for the judgment of equivalence of sanitary measures.

FSIS requests comments on whether the paper, which is scheduled for presentation at the next CCFICS meeting in late February 1998, provides a framework that should be accepted, in general, by the United States for international determinations of equivalence between meat and poultry inspection systems. Written comments received in response to this notice will help prepare U.S. Delegates for the upcoming CCFICS discussions on equivalence and will further the development of FSIS equivalence policies for imported meat and poultry products. FSIS intends to publish equivalence policies for public review and comment in the spring of 1998. The Agency will subsequently hold a public meeting to obtain additional comments on equivalence determinations.

Done at Washington, DC on January 28, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-2763 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

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